

that are inciting sectarian violence, and get the capital under control. The last of these reinforcements arrived in Iraq earlier this month, and the full surge has begun. One of our top commanders in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, put it this way: "We are beyond a surge of forces. We're now into a surge of operations."

Recently, we launched Operation Phantom Thunder, which has taken the fight to the enemy in Baghdad as well as the surrounding regions. We're still at the beginning of this offensive, but we're seeing some hopeful signs. We're engaging the enemy and killing or capturing hundreds. Just this week, our commanders reported the killing of two senior Al Qaida leaders north of Baghdad. Within Baghdad, our military reports that despite an upward trend in May, sectarian murders in the capital are significantly down from what they were in January. We're also finding arms caches at more than three times the rate of a year ago. The enemy continues to carry out sensational attacks, but the number of car bombings and suicide attacks has been down in May and June. And because of our new strategy, U.S. and Iraqi forces are living among the people they secure, with the result that many Iraqis are now coming forward with information on where the terrorists are hiding.

The fight in Iraq has been tough, and it will remain difficult. We've lost good men and women in this fight. One of those lost was a marine lance corporal named Luke Yepsen. In the spring of 2005, Luke withdrew from his classes at Texas A&M to join the United States Marines. And in October 2006, he deployed to Iraq, where he manned a 50-caliber machine gun on a Humvee. Six months ago, Luke was killed by a sniper while on patrol in Anbar Province. Luke's father describes his son's sacrifice this way: "Luke died bringing freedom to an oppressed people. My urgent request is, finish the mission. Bring freedom to the Iraqi people."

On this Fourth of July, we remember Luke Yepsen and all the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in this struggle. They've helped bring freedom to the Iraqi people. They've helped make Americans more secure. We will not forget their

sacrifice. We remember their loved ones in our prayers. And we give thanks for all those from every generation who have defended our Nation and our freedoms.

Laura and I wish you a safe and happy Fourth of July. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on June 29 in Kennebunkport, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on Modifications to the Visa Waiver Program**

*June 30, 2007*

Last November, I announced my intention to seek modifications to our Visa Waiver Program that would offer our closest partners in Central and Eastern Europe as well as others, such as the Republic of Korea, an accelerated process for admission to the program as we strengthen the program's security components. I am committed to continuing to work with Congress to produce legislation that would strengthen our country's security by implementing this initiative. It is in our Nation's interest to facilitate travel to the United States and, at the same time, to prevent terrorists from being able to exploit that travel.

### **Statement on the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement**

*June 30, 2007*

I am pleased that United States Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab and Republic of Korea Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong today signed the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement. This agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, and service suppliers, promote economic growth and the creation of better paying jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them greater choices. The agreement will also further enhance the